

## **Recycling & Refuse Management Committee Minutes**

May 5, 2011

In attendance: Lucy McMurrer, Meg Vickery, Marianne Lorenzelli, Sue Morrello, John Root, Laurel Dickey, Susan Waite.

Visiting: Cristina Cox-Fernandez, Brenda Davies.

April Minutes approved.

**Membership update:** 2 visitors considering joining the committee. Lucy's last meeting is today. Supposed to have 7 members. Marianne will stay until 1 more member is found. Perhaps Sue Cairn will join this summer.

**Landfill Alternatives Subcommittee Report:** Discussed different alternative. Need to do more research. Susan Waite brought a list of alternatives. Roger, the Five College recycling director, also brought a lot of information. John and Guilford met this morning with representatives from Harvest Power who will be submitting a proposal for construction of an anaerobic composter. It would need 30,000 tons per year of waste to process.

### **Foam Free Discussion with Tony Maroulis (Chamber of Commerce Director):**

Lucy explained the Committee's anti-foam efforts to date. We are hoping to decrease the amount of foam that is used for take-out food in Amherst. Want to encourage businesses to use alternatives. Will benefit landfills and human health. Want to provide businesses incentives to switch. Originally were pursuing an ordinance, but have decided that a "softer" approach would be more productive. Need to create a plan to encourage businesses to switch.

Tony says that Chamber members are largely supportive. Places that are more conservative or may not speak English as their first language may be less likely to adopt a foam-free practice. Savings from a bulk purchasing program would be an incentive. Starting this with the Taste of Amherst. Education will be another important component. He advised us of need to be aware of the potential of business owner "green-fatigue."

Locals will be easier to work with than corporate businesses, but once there is a strong local effort, then pressure could be brought to bear on the larger companies. Tony supports the idea of "good news" ads listing businesses who are non-foam and door stickers to advertise that a business is foam-free. Advertise on the town web site a list of those in compliance. Flattery works and has lasting impacts. Could have a "rack card" that lists all the foam-free businesses (available at the Chamber and elsewhere) or a give-away for compliance or for visiting foam-free establishments. Valley Advocate award for "greenest?" Brenda asked who would manage the bulk buying? Tony – currently a management problem, but could be dealt with.

We are focusing on foam because it is a known carcinogen and the volume is massive. A question: Do the businesses know this? Best solution is a combination of voluntary

compliance and ordinances. Tony pointed out that businesses are concerned with making money, not necessarily understanding what the negative impact of foam is. We need to give businesses information, but not too much information. Extended consumer responsibility is involved. Tony will look for information about cooperative ordering through other Chambers of Commerce. Individual contact is the most likely way to get businesses to participate. Could advertise at the Taste of Amherst (20<sup>th</sup> anniversary) for those businesses that are foam-free back at their own place of business. Susan will call a special meeting if composting at the Taste of Amherst meeting is possible.

#### Earth Day Wrap:

- Trash Free Lunch Day: Schools think it would be helpful to move to the fall (maybe America Recycles Day in November). Competition is fierce at the schools. We will discuss this further in September. Pictures were taken and distributed.
- Sustainability Festival: Very wet. Eco-Hero Hunt also had low participation, but is still good for PR and education. Need more conversation about this as well.
- Earth Day newspaper insert (Bulletin & Gazette) was distributed.